



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Groundfish Tagging Program

AGENCY: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of information collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before (insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER).

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648-0276 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to, Rebecca Reuter, Fisheries Biologist, NOAA Fisheries Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle WA 98115, 425-666-9578, and Rebecca.reuter@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

The groundfish tagging program provides scientists with information necessary for effective conservation, management, and scientific understanding of the groundfish fishery off Alaska and the Northwest Pacific. The program area includes the Pacific Ocean off Alaska (the Gulf of Alaska, the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area, and the Alexander Archipelago of Southeast Alaska), California, Oregon, and Washington. Fish movement information from recovered tags is used in population dynamics models for stock assessment. There are three general categories of tags. Simple plastic tags (spaghetti tags) are external tags approximately two inches long, printed with code numbers. When a tag is returned, the tag number is correlated with databases of released, tagged fish to determine the net movement and growth rate of the tagged fish. Archival tags are microchips with sensors encased in plastic cylinders that record the depth, temperature or other data, which can be downloaded electronically from the recovered tags. Pop-off satellite tags are programmed to release from the fish and upload archived data (depth, temperature, and approximate geolocation) to passing satellites, therefore data is received independent of the fishery. The groundfish tagging and tag recovery program is part of the fishery resource assessment and data collection that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducts under the Magnuson-Stevens Act authority as codified in 16 U.S.C. 1801 (a)(8).

II. Method of Collection

This is a volunteer program requiring the actual tag from the fish to be returned, along with recovery information. Reporting forms with pre-addressed and postage-free envelopes are distributed to processors and catcher vessels.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0276.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a currently approved collection).

Affected Public: Not-for-profit institutions; State, local, or tribal government; business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 440.

Estimated Time Per Response: 5 minutes for returning a regular tag, and 20 minutes for returning an internal archival tag.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 89.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$30 in recordkeeping/reporting costs

Legal Authority: Magnuson-Stevens Act.

IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Sheleen Dumas,

Department PRA Clearance Officer,

Office of the Chief Information Officer,

Commerce Department

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